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ABSTRACT

This handbook is designed to assist preceptors/mentors in a local allied health technology program, a school/industry partnership focused on training students for entry-level employment in the health care field by means of a work internship/externship. It draws heavily on the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report's foundation skills: basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities. It briefly discusses the school/industry partnership, vision for student interns/externs, and benefits of an allied health technologies internship/externship. The next part of the handbook focuses on the SCANS Report. It outlines the three-part foundation of SCANS skills, the five SCANS competencies, and industry's ranking of the SCANS skills. The career development model is then presented. The roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders are described: preceptor/mentor, intern/extern, allied health technologies instructor, school, and worksite coordinator. The handbook also contains the following: benefits to the intern/extern and industry; answers to questions most often asked about health occupations internships/externships; definitions of key terms; recommendations regarding assessment and evaluation and sample assessment form; and brief discussion of credentialling. (YLB)

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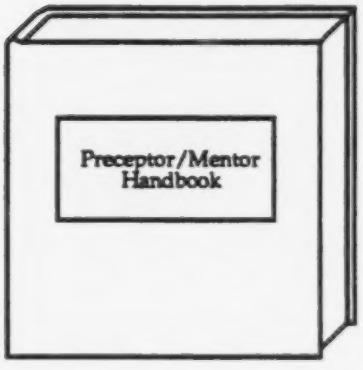
ED 408 473

Allied Health Technologies

Preceptor/Mentor Handbook



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National Consortium on Health and Science Technology Education

Traverse Bay Intermediate School District

Project ProTech
Private Industry Council
Boston, Massachusetts

The State of Michigan Mission Statement

The mission of vocational-technical and occupational education is to ensure that youth and adults have access to cooperatively planned educational services that provide opportunities to prepare for successful career entry, advancement, and/or continuing education, and are designed to meet their current and future personal and employment needs.

Statement of Purpose

The **Preceptor/Mentor Handbook** results from collaborations among education, community, and industry partners. Together, the Allied Health Technologies programs provide academic instruction and workplace training designed to prepare students for jobs in various health-related careers and professions.

In developing this handbook, the committee focused on the SCANS Report's foundation skills. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) studied the demands of today's workplace and whether our young people are capable of meeting those demands. Specifically, the Commission sought to determine the skills needed for employment, identify acceptable levels of proficiency, and suggest effective ways to gain proficiency. The major conclusions drawn from conversations with industry owners, public employers, managers, union officials, and employees found that:

- all American high school students must develop a new set of competencies and foundation skills in order to enjoy a productive, full, and satisfying life; and
- the qualities of high performance that today characterize most competitive companies must become the standard for all of our companies, large and small.

As a result, the SCANS report recommends a three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities needed for solid job performance:

- **basic skills**—including reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, and listening;
- **thinking skills**—including thinking creatively, making decisions solving problems, and knowing how to learn; and
- **personal qualities**—including individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.

As the health care industry continues to grow and to change, we will require a workforce capable of continuous learning. New technologies, new challenges, and new demands will require a high degree of professionalism in our employees. Michigan Allied Health Technologies programs are a primary source for our future healthcare workforce.

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The School/Industry Partnership

Because of marketplace pressures on organizations for quality, efficiency, and efficacy in service and operations, schools and industry have formed partnerships to create a competent workforce ready to tackle those pressures. Students who participate in such partnerships benefit by being more able to meet the demands of a competitive job market and, so, increase their chances to find satisfying work. Your local Allied Health Technology program is a school/industry partnership focused on training students for entry-level employment in the health care field by means of a work internship/externship.

The Allied Health Technology school/industry partnership builds a competent workforce by involving high school students in support in the health care delivery system.

Dear Preceptor/Mentor

Thank you for providing an on-the-job opportunity for student interns/externs from an Allied Health Technology program. These students come to you as potential members of the health care workforce; toward this goal they have explored available career options.

As they gain valuable work experience, Career Technical Education would like the interns/externs to put their work experience into the context of the entire health care delivery system. You will help them by giving them an understanding of your administrative infrastructure and purpose before they go into a direct-care environment. By communicating background information clearly—in daily instruction, task assignment, and explanation of function, purpose, and department goals—you will achieve this intent. This introduction to a systems perspective on how people, systems, and processes work in concert for effective health care delivery will provide a foundation for these students as they begin their health care careers.

Thank you for your commitment and contribution toward building a qualified workforce for tomorrow! You will be instrumental in forming the student interns'/externs' perceptions about a career in health care. First impressions are lasting!

Carole A. Stacy, R.N., M.A.
Allied Health Technology
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Our Vision for Student Interns/Externs

Allied Health Technology students will be provided internships leading to knowledge, competence, and employability in the health care field. They will learn first-hand about working in a health care organization, will enhance their organizational and communication skills, gain an awareness of the importance of career choices, and develop appropriate interpersonal and other workplace skills.

Allied Health Technologies Internship/Externship

This experience will allow students to develop a variety of social and technical skills and offers the following opportunities:

- understanding the relationship between educational experiences and occupational choices
- coming in contact with a variety of career experiences
- becoming entry-level-trained in a health care environment
- experiencing "real-life" work in a health care environment
- learning effective ways to interact on a professional level with adults
- completing job tasks successfully
- receiving feedback and enjoying the rewards of improved performance

Excerpts from the SCANS Report

Where Are We Now?

- More than half of our young people leave school without the knowledge or the foundation as to how one holds a job.
- High-paying unskilled jobs are disappearing. Good jobs will increasingly depend on employees who can put knowledge to work.
- The globalization of commerce and industry and an explosive growth of technology on the job have changed the terms for entry into the world of work.

Where Are we Going?

The SCANS report lists the competencies and foundation skills which, when integrated and working simultaneously, bring about excellent job performance. These are essential requirements for all students, whether it be those going directly to work or those going on to college.

A Three-Part Foundation of SCANS Skills

The Foundation—competence requires the following skills and qualities:

1 BASIC SKILLS • Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, actively listens, and speaks

Reading. Locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents, such as manuals, graphs, and schedules.

Writing. Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts.

Arithmetic/mathematics. Performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.

Listening. Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues.

Speaking. Organizes ideas and communicates effectively.

2 THINKING SKILLS • Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons

Creative thinking. Generates new ideas.

Decision making. Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative.

Problem solving. Recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action.

Visualizing. Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information.

Knowing how to learn. Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills.

Reasoning. Discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem.

3 PERSONAL QUALITIES • Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty

Responsibility. Exerts a high level of effort and perseveres toward attaining goal.

Self-esteem. Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self.

Sociability. Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.

Self-management. Assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control.

Integrity/honesty. Chooses ethical courses of action.

The Five SCANS Competencies

1 RESOURCES • Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

Competencies—effective workers productively use the following skills and knowledges:

Time. Selects and prioritizes goal-relevant activities, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules.

Money. Prepares or uses budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives.

Material and facilities. Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently.

Human resources. Assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance, and provides feedback.

2 INTERPERSONAL • Works with others

Participates as a team member. Contributes to group effort.

Teaches others new skills.

Serves clients and customers. Works to satisfy customers' expectations.

Exercises leadership. Communicates ideas to explain position, persuades and influences others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies.

Negotiates. Works toward agreements involving exchange of resources. Resolves divergent interests.

Works with diversity. Works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds.

3 INFORMATION • Acquires and uses information

Acquires and evaluates information.

Organizes and maintains information.

Interprets and communicates information.

Uses computers to process information.

4 SYSTEMS • Understands complex interrelationships

Understands systems. Knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work, and operates effectively with them.

Monitors and corrects performance. Distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems' performance, and correct malfunctions.

Improves or designs systems. Suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance.

5 TECHNOLOGY • Works with a variety of technologies

Selects technology. Chooses procedures, tools, or equipment, including computers and related technologies.

Applies technology to task. Understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment.

Maintains and troubleshoots equipment. Prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.

These competencies should be integrated into worksite learning activities to show how they relate to the area of allied health that the intern/extern is experiencing.

Industry Ranks the SCANS Skills

Industry ranked the SCANS skills according to their importance, listed below with the most valued skill ranked as number 1.

1 **Listening:** Receives, interprets, and acts upon verbal directions and information.

2 **Responsibility:** Displays high standards of attendance, punctuality, enthusiasm, vitality, and optimism.

3 **Integrity and honesty:** Chooses ethical courses of action, can be trusted.

4 **Teamwork:** Works cooperatively with others and contributes to group ideas, suggestions, and effort.

5 **Reading:** Locates, understands, and interprets written information (including manuals, graphs, and schedules) needed to perform tasks.

6 **Serves Clients/Customers:** Works to satisfy clients' and customers' expectations.

7 **Speaking:** Speaks clearly, understands and responds to listener feedback, asks appropriate questions.

8 **Responsibility:** Works to achieve excellence by setting high standards, paying attention to details, working effectively, and displaying a high level of concentration even with an unpleasant task.

9 **Speaking:** Organizes ideas and appropriately communicates thoughts to others.

10 **Sociability:** Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and courtesy.

Understanding the Career Development Model

As students develop, they go through these developmental stages:

Awareness: passive compiling and integration of information and experiences.

Experiences: testing and manipulating concepts and experiences.

Preparation: broad development of entry skills.

Specialization: development of specific skills within a particular area.

Their development includes these specific elements:

Self-awareness: knowing one's interests and abilities; acquiring a positive attitude toward self and others.

Educational awareness: knowing the training required for a specific job.

Career awareness: knowing the job title for a specific career.

Economic awareness: knowing the monetary system and how money relates to work; acquiring the competencies needed to make wise decisions in the use of individuals resources.

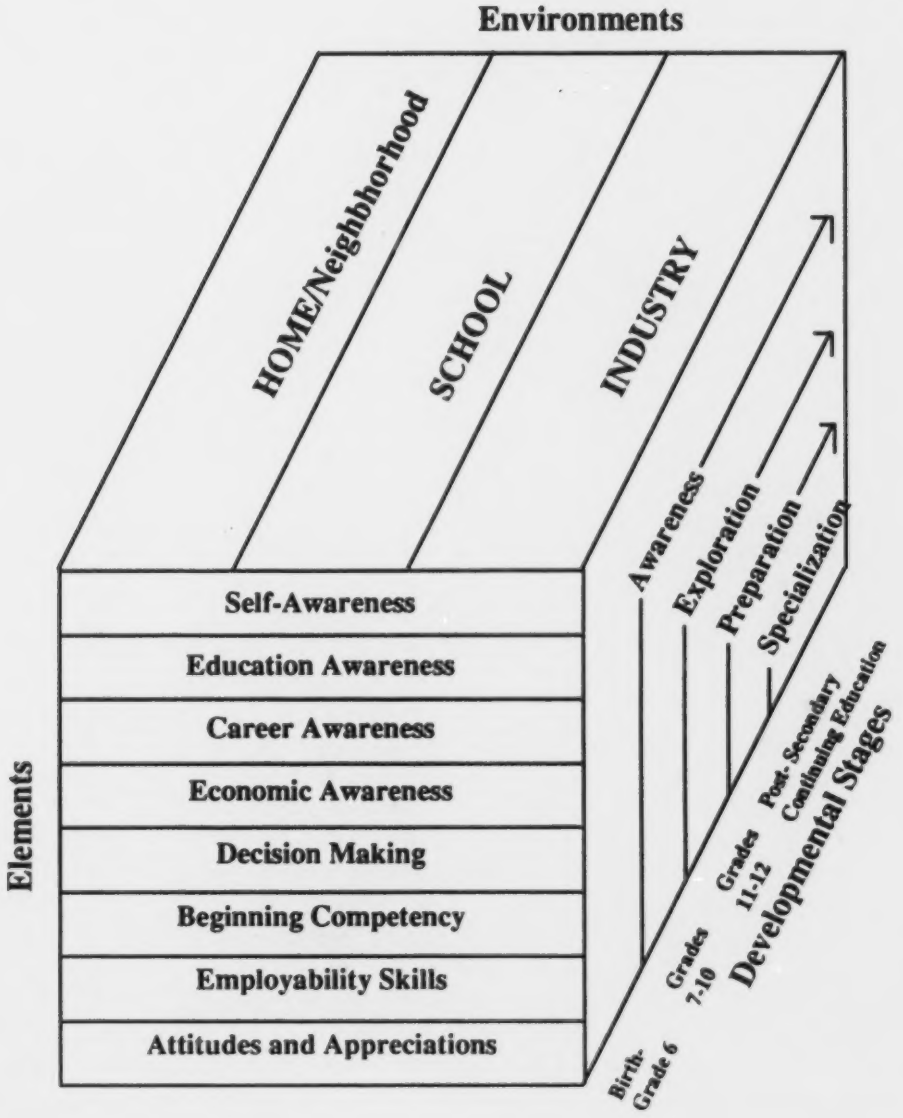
Decision-making abilities: engaging in a career development process designed to increase knowledge of self, work, and society, and applying this knowledge to make wise decisions along the career-development continuum.

Beginning competency: basic skills needed to work with data, people, or things.

Employability skills: mastering the skills essential for locating and obtaining career placement; mastering the skills needed to hold a job.

Attitudes and appreciations: developing positive attitudes toward learning, work, leisure, and individual and cultural differences.

The career-development model on the following page graphically shows how these concepts relate and in which grades students typically acquire them. The internship/externship program will help accelerate students' career-development awareness and their acquisition of SCANS competencies and skills.



The Career Development Model

Roles and Responsibilities of the Preceptor/Mentor

I. Roles of the Preceptor/Mentor

A preceptor/mentor should help the intern/extern discover the critical connections between academic work and real-job readiness by providing work opportunities and experiences. A preceptor/mentor should direct students to needed resources, enhance areas of career exploration, support academic endeavors, and provide support to enhance and promote intern/extern progress and success. The preceptor/mentor goes beyond performing the skills expected of his or her profession by willingly sharing professional experiences and behavior with an intern/extern to help that person in his or her own personal growth and career achievement.

Purposes and Possible Outcomes of the Program

- Encourages particular groups to enter and/or advance in a specific profession (i.e., men in nursing, females into medicine).
- Provides technical skills and learning that are difficult to impart in a class or lab setting.
- Encourages the intern/extern to be involved in the learning process as well as taking greater responsibility and investment in their learning.
- Encourages work places to foster a helping and sharing environment.
- Helps individuals to reach their full potential.

Interacting with Your Intern/Extern

Establishing a positive rapport with your intern/extern is an important first step to developing a strong intern/extern-preceptor/mentor relationship. Supervising an intern/extern presents a unique opportunity to positively affect the learning of a future health care worker. With time, you may become a positive adult role model in the intern's/extern's life, which could strongly impact the intern's/extern's career choices. If your intern/extern comes to you for advice, think carefully about the weight your words may carry before making specific recommendations.

Interns/externs may come from a background that greatly differs from your own. The intern/extern may be confronting social or academic issues that could adversely affect his or her job performance. If the intern/extern approaches you for guidance about a specific issue, be professional, sensitive, and supportive. While it is important that you help your intern/extern learn the importance of separating personal issues from professional performance, you should guide your students in the direction of appropriate support services. The first step is to contact your student's instructor or worksite coordinator.

II. Responsibilities of the Preceptor/Mentor

Students will need your help in order to make the most of their work experience. Because their internship/externship may be their first work experience, students will likely need extra coaching and time from you.

Components of an Internship/Externship Program

- Intern/extern actively involved.
- Preceptor/mentor acts as a facilitator, manager, resource person, and consultant in the total learning process.
- Specific objectives and outcomes provided for intern/extern.
- Regular, planned feedback and evaluation of intern/extern performance given.

Responsibilities

- Learn techniques for effective communication and interaction with adolescents.
- Inform the intern/extern about workplace norms, customs, and expectations.
- Know the participating school's curriculum and the student's educational plans, previous knowledge, and concepts (transfer of learning). Information which fits the intern's/extern's needs can provide substantial impact.
- Help define short- and long-term career goals. Explore options.
- Provide caring, consistent, and concrete support and guidance to the intern/extern; set high, achievable expectations within the intern's/extern's scope of practice and readiness.
- Communicate regularly with the program liaison(s) to discuss the intern's/extern's progress. Maintain confidentiality. Report serious concerns immediately to the instructor.
- Help the intern/extern to develop specific competencies in order to: correctly allocate resources, develop team-focused interpersonal skills, acquire and evaluate data, understand organizational systems, and apply technology related to specific competencies.

The preceptor's/mentor's responsibilities also include preparing the intern/extern for a successful experience, coordinating any necessary activities with the worksite liaison, and monitoring the student's performance.

Preparation

- Conduct an orientation to the department that gives an overview of the work in your department, introducing the intern/extern to the employees in your area, and touring the department.

- Review the work schedule and the appropriate organization, facility, and department policies and procedures with the intern/extern.
- Select and assign work appropriate to the students' skills and backgrounds.

Coordination

- Work out intern/extern problems with the worksite coordinator or instructor.
- Give the intern/extern a variety of experiences in order to provide a real-life work challenge.
- Maintain intern/extern records in a specific location accessible to students and the worksite coordinator or instructor.
- Provide clear instructions about each task. Explain the content of each assignment, including what is to be done and why. Help the intern/extern understand the value of his/her work. Whether doing simple or complex tasks, the intern/extern should know the value his or her job contributes to the department and to the organization.

Performance Monitoring

- Evaluate the intern/extern formally and informally on an ongoing basis.
- Regularly monitor each intern's/extern's work hours.

As preceptor/mentor, you must monitor the following details related to intern/extern performance. If performance problems arise, you will be responsible for counseling the intern/extern, informing the worksite coordinator, and documenting the incident. The following situations, organized by degree of seriousness of the problem and how it may affect a student's continued participation in the program, call for discipline and/or counseling:

- one instance of "no call, no show"
- inappropriate dress
- poor work quality
- disrespectful communication
- excessive tardiness, as defined by the worksite preceptor/mentor and instructor coordinator

These behaviors are more serious and may constitute removal from the internship:

- lack of response to discipline or counseling
- a second instance of "no call, no show"
- breach of confidentiality (patient and business information, personnel records, etc.)

- insubordination
- lack of cooperation
- disorderly conduct or fighting
- reporting to the worksite under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- theft
- property damage

III. Skills and Qualities of the Preceptor/Mentor

Interpersonal Skills

- Ask questions to help the intern/extern articulate future goals
- Be supportive and accessible; be patient; relate to others with the assumption that they are capable
- Base relationship on a foundation of collaboration
- Control and appropriately express emotions
- Correct without belittling; point out behaviors that may compromise or sabotage personal goals
- Recognize the positive impact that the intern/extern makes on the team
- Encourage a climate of mutual respect; encourage the intern/extern to aspire and pursue his or her aspirations; encourage him or her to gain knowledge
- Focus on *issues* rather than *personalities* when solving problems
- Foster feelings of self-achievement
- Guide rather than direct
- Be aware of cultural differences
- Help the intern/extern recognize the outcomes of his or her actions and plans
- Listen actively to help the speaker focus; listen attentively and empathetically
- Look for the strengths in others and give positive feedback
- Make decisions based on clear strategies
- Provide a broad range of experiences
- Adapt to changing circumstances

Organizational Skills, Clarity of Presentation

- Present material in an organized manner
- Communicate effectively what is to be learned
- Emphasize what is important

- Clearly explain concepts and skills
- Summarize major points
- Clearly understand the program's mission, goal, and objectives
- Understand the historical origins of events and the meaning of trends

Enthusiasm and Motivation

- Follow through on commitments
- Be energetic, dynamic, and confident
- Use humor
- Stimulate intern's/extern's interest; demonstrate enjoyment of teaching
- Take the initiative, take action that is not required
- Recognize strengths in others before they see them in themselves
- Encourage the intern/extern to problem-solve, make correct decisions
- Help the intern/extern to clarify career goals.

Knowledge and Awareness

- Possess content expertise
- Reveal broad reading in your speciality
- Discuss current developments in your speciality
- Recognize and respond to teachable moments
- Know the intern's/extern's limitations
- Understand adolescent learning styles and behaviors
- Know specific competencies to be taught

Instructional Skills

- Connect classroom theory to clinical performance
- Encourage active participation in discussions
- Give positive reinforcement for good observations or performances
- Gear instruction to intern's/extern's level of readiness
- Carefully and precisely answer questions raised by intern/extern
- Question intern/extern to elicit underlying reasoning
- Help interns/externs organize their thoughts, e.g., in problem solving
- Demonstrate clinical procedures and techniques being taught
- Demonstrate quality assurance through skills practice
- Use resources effectively to facilitate intern's/extern's learning

Clinical Supervision

- Communicate role expectations
- Guide the interns'/externs' development of clinical skills
- Provide systematic practice opportunities (simple to complex)
- Offer help when difficulties arise
- Identify interns'/externs' strengths and limitations objectively
- Give frequent feedback to interns/externs regarding competence
- Advocate for patients/clients

Clinical Competence

- Demonstrate clinical skill and judgment; demonstrate skills at data gathering
- Objectively identify patient/client problem(s)
- Synthesize patient/client problems rapidly
- Interpret laboratory data skillfully

The result: Students will be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for productive entry-level employment. Remember, preceptors/mentors help, but interns/externs *do*!

Roles and Responsibilities of the Intern/Extern

Students have a role in and responsibility for having a successful work experience. They should practice good communication skills, demonstrate good work habits, and share their knowledge with other interns/externs in the program. Remember: the intern/extern is not an employee but rather has been invited as a guest to the work site to benefit from a learning experience that cannot be adequately provided by their school

Work Habits

- Completes pre-experience requirements regarding health and safety requirements of school and work site (examples: TB test, drug testing, vaccination updates, body mechanics instruction).
- Demonstrates a desire to participate in program by learning and studying work site mission and how the assigned department supports the mission.
- Uses the internship/externship to learn about a real work experience in the health care field. Learns as much as possible about the department and how it supports health care delivery.
- Searches out varied opportunities for learning.
- Follows through on commitments and seeks help when needed.
- Treats all coworkers, patients, customers with respect, sensitivity, and courtesy.
- Has realistic expectations.
- Knows and abides by the scope of practice for specific professions.
- Reports unusual or uncertain situations promptly and clearly to correct person.
- Participates in problem-solving whenever opportune.
- Keeps client and employee information confidential.
- Demonstrates a positive and professional attitude.

Worksite Communication

- Appropriately asks questions to:
    a) understand the importance of tasks,
    b) obtain clarity about the task, its purpose or instructions, and
    c) obtain all information needed to do the job well or to make a recommendation for improvement.
- Promptly contacts the instructor coordinator and worksite preceptor/mentor if he or she will be late or if ill and unable to come to work.
- Frequently initiates contact with preceptor/mentor.
- Articulates learning goals, needs, deficiencies.

- Shares important and/or strong feelings and emotions.
- Seeks and is open to feedback and evaluation from preceptor/mentor and instructor.
- Properly represents and introduces self to coworkers and patients.
- Articulates and demonstrates awareness of patients' "Bill of Rights."

Sharing Knowledge

- Shares knowledge about department and work experiences with peers and takes advantage of the opportunity to learn about departments and work experiences.
- Participates in appropriate evaluation of program.

Personal Dress and Appearance

- Dresses appropriately at the worksite.
- Keeps hair well groomed and in an appropriate style.
- Keeps uniform (when applicable) clean.
- Keeps make-up, perfume, and jewelry to a minimum.
- Follows facility dress code.

Commitment of Time

- Arrives on time.
- Doesn't agree to a job schedule if it conflicts with previous commitments.
- Clears schedule conflicts ahead of time. A conflict that prevents a intern/extern from working or arriving on time on a specific day should be cleared with as much notice as possible. This is also true for worksite absences or tardiness. Interns/externs should *ask* their preceptor/mentor for the time off, not demand it.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Allied Health Technology Instructor

Each instructor has a part in ensuring the success of the interns/externs at the worksite. Instructors may take care of certain logistical responsibilities (e.g., attendance), monitor intern/extern progress, and coordinate with the worksite preceptor/mentor.

Logistics

- Ensures completion of training plan with appropriate signatures prior to beginning of assignment; ensures that all contracts and agreements are completed in a timely fashion.
- Provides a school district calendar of school holidays, vacations, final examinations, and pupil-free days to the worksite preceptor/mentor prior to the first day of the internship/externship.
- Provides information about program to parents, students, counselors; provides instruction on job- and industry-related competencies; and provides an appropriate forum for students to discuss worksite experiences.
- Is flexible with time to meet with preceptor/mentor and intern/extern.
- Pre-plans for unexpected down time.
- Serves as liaison between school and work site. Acts as first school contact for any intern/extern-related concerns.
- Negotiates and interacts with facility and preceptor/mentor in a professional manner.
- Resolves conflicts and intervenes in crises.
- Solves problems, trouble shoots.

Intern/Extern Progress

- Matches interns/externs with preceptors/mentors and work sites based on intern/extern career goals, available learning opportunities, geographical area, etc.
- Reviews and reinforces worksite rules, such as work hours, breaks, dress code, general workplace competencies, workplace safety, and required equipment and supplies, etc.
- Articulates responsibilities and expectations of intern/extern to the intern/extern and all appropriate staff.
- Coordinates with the preceptor/mentor and makes worksite visits to *observe and assess intern/extern experience, progress, and skill achievement and certifies skill achievement.*

- Monitors completion of worksite assignments given by the preceptor/mentor and evaluates the appropriateness of the learning activities.
- Collaborates on an on-going basis with intern/extern and preceptor/mentor in determining the learning goals (task list, competencies).
- Documents serious concerns, behavioral difficulties, or intern/extern needs, and assists with supportive services to the intern's/extern's counselor, program coordinator, or appropriate contact.

Coordination with Preceptor/Mentor

- Develops working relationships with preceptors/mentors in order to evaluate preceptor/mentor effectiveness and to improve the interns'/externs' worksite learning.
- Works with preceptor/mentor in continuing development and review of task list for each intern/extern.
- Reviews worksite evaluations with preceptor/mentor and intern/extern and assists in developing a plan of action to meet deficiencies.
- Holds final responsibility for grading and evaluating in collaboration with preceptor/mentor.
- Provides positive reinforcement and feedback to preceptor/mentor.
- Uses the internship/externship as a self-learning tool to help students better bridge the school-to-work transition.
- Is available in emergency situations or in absence of preceptor/mentor.

Responsibilities of the School

School responsibilities include:

- Developing a true partnership with business and industry.
- Providing liability coverage.
- Supporting the program by providing the instructor with planning and coordination time.
- Rewarding and recognizing the instructor.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Worksite Coordinator

Worksite coordinator roles and responsibilities include:

- Articulating responsibilities and expectations of students to the intern/extern and all appropriate staff.
- Assisting in developing the intern/extern training plan.
- Providing up-to-date technology, resources (such as space), and a safe learning environment.
- Regularly evaluating the program.
- Supporting the program.
- Developing a true partnership with school.
- Meeting regularly with program liaison or appropriate contact.
- Identifying the pool of potential preceptors/mentors.
- Recognizing efforts of preceptor/mentor on evaluation and providing the preceptor/mentor with such perks as release time and added pay.

If a worksite coordinator is not provided, these responsibilities fall to the Allied Health Technologies instructor.

Marketing the Program

Benefits to Intern/Extern

- links school to work
- practical applications of learning
- builds self-esteem
- sharpens critical thinking skills
- develops competency
- starts on developing a network
- improves employment potential
- improves earning potential
- improves articulation skills
- improves interpersonal skills
- increases chance of college success
- clarifies career planning
- learns how to learn

Benefits to Industry

- creates positive image in community
- increases recruitment pool
- decreases recruiting costs
- creates a better-trained workforce and enlarges pool of qualified workforce
- improves quality of client/patient care
- increases number of healthy, happy patients and clients
- reinforces staff critical thinking
- helps keep staff current
- improves staff morale
- impacts public school system
- reduces school drop-outs
- increases intern/extern success
- participation of preceptor/mentor increases professional attitude
- creates a marketing tool

Answers to Questions Most Often Asked about Health Occupations Internships/Externships

What is the Health Occupations Internship/Externship?

The internship/externship is an educational experience for high school students enrolled in a career technical education program. It is intended to give students some real-life exposure to a health career of interest, to assist in the school-to-work transition, and to teach some marketable skills for entry-level positions.

Why is your employer involved with the provision of internships/externships positions for Health Occupations?

Your employer has affiliated with the local school district because it wants to strengthen alliances with education, to make a contribution to the community by investing in the education of our youth, to recruit local talent to health care professions, and to create a pool of potential employees for entry-level positions.

What does the unit or department have to gain from investing its resources in an Allied Health Technology internship/externship?

Preceptoring/mentoring an intern/extern in an internship/externship offers the department an opportunity to partially train and evaluate a potential employee without risking budget monies, to solicit some assistance with workload at no cost, and to enjoy preceptoring/mentoring young people interested in their specialty. Worthwhile internships/externships, without exception, have proven to influence career choices, so they are wonderful opportunities to recruit into one's own profession.

What background does a Health Occupations student have before being placed in an internship/externship?

First-year Allied Health Technology students study health care delivery systems, anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, nutrition, human growth and development, communications, computer usage, health and safety in the work setting, and legal and ethical issues involved in health care, such as patient confidentiality and patient rights. Additionally, they have achieved basic competencies in taking vital signs, patient transfer techniques, aseptic techniques, and isolation procedures. Students complete First Aid and CPR training and have been introduced to a variety of health care professions through job shadowing and guest presentations. Some students will have specialized training in nurse assistant, phlebotomy, unit clerk and basic EKG.

What should an internship/externship experience include?

Any basic tasks that are appropriate for a 6-10 hour a week job experience. Tasks should reinforce previously learned skills, provide additional training and education. Learning

should be progressive, hands-on, and include basic professional skills. A small amount of background reading and instruction is ideal. Some intern/extern abilities will vary, so assessment on the unit will help.

What should an internship/externship experience NOT include?

Interns/externs should not be given repetitive menial tasks that you would consider busywork. We are obliged to provide experience that would document progressive learning because the internship/externship experience is first and foremost an educational experience. That doesn't mean that interns/externs can't repeat previously learned professional skills. It means that we shouldn't assign a steady diet of housekeeping or gophering chores.

What is expected of the unit/department preceptor/mentor?

The preceptor/mentor needs to work with the internship/externship coordinator or instructor in developing task lists, participating in intern/extern evaluation, and problem solving. Assist with developing an individualized task list before each internship/externship year begins and throughout the year as new challenges are required.

Supervisors should assign a nurturing preceptor/mentor (ideally the same one or two throughout the entire internship/externship) who is willing to work with a high school student. Some preceptors may need support and assistance in understanding the program's goals and the student's background and capabilities. In the event of problems, concerns, or questions of any kind, the preceptor/mentor should contact the worksite coordinator and/or the Allied Health instructor.

Performance evaluations will be needed regularly during the school year. These can be delegated solely to the preceptor/mentor or developed jointly with the worksite coordinator.

What is expected of the preceptor/mentor?

Preceptors/mentors should precept/mentor and nurture the interns/externs to make them feel like a part of the facility's work group. Responsibilities include planning learning activities, teaching and supervising, documenting interns'/externs' progress, and serving as a resource person for intern/extern projects and case studies. Preceptors/mentors should be present when the interns/externs report and leave.

Completion of performance evaluations or participation in this process in a timely manner is very important. Address concerns to the worksite coordinator.

What can be expected of the intern/extern?

Expect an intern/extern to contribute to the facility's work group. He or she should exhibit good employee behaviors, such as dependability, responsibility, compliance with facility policy and rules, including unit dress code and appropriate professional conduct. Report

any schedule conflicts or problems, such as illness, to the unit preceptor/mentor in a timely manner and reschedule. Do not expect an intern/extern to work during scheduled school vacation times (unless this is the only convenient make-up time), during approved school functions, or during times of inclement weather as announced on the radio. In any of these events you should receive a call from the intern/extern.

Other questions worksite staff will have:

- If the preceptor's/mentor's productivity decreases as a result of preceptoring/ mentoring, will he or she be penalized?
- What is the orientation to the mentoring program like?
- What support will the preceptor/mentor will obtain from his or her institution/agency and the academic institution?
- What are the liabilities of a preceptor/mentor (re: intern/extern injury, inappropriate behavior , etc.)?

Key Terms

Advanced interpersonal skills. Communicates with patient and families, management, and members of the health care team in a clear, courteous, and appropriate manner. Facilitates cooperation and a positive work environment.

- Keeps focus of interaction on patient and patient's family
- Communicates in a collaborative manner with other disciplines
- Is open and receptive to hearing complains and concerns
- Responds to patient and family anger nondefensively
- Demonstrates tact and sensitivity when dealing with patients and patients' families
- Demonstrates tact and sensitivity when dealing with coworkers
- Demonstrates ability to provide constructive recommendations to enhance oriented practice

Mentor. An informal, self-determined relationship that evolves between two individuals. The preceptor/mentor functions as a positive role model, instructor, coach, trainers, or a developer of talent. The preceptor/mentor provides support, advice, and constructive criticism to persons who are professionally developing themselves.

Preceptor. A formal, structured relationship who works with students new to the clinical area for a defined length of time. Has established goals and objectives, a structure of interaction and responsibility for evaluation. The preceptor/preceptor/mentor functions as an advocate, role model, and occupation specific clinical resource for the intern/extern.

Professional behavior. Staff member demonstrates initiative, hospitality, dependability as a team member, and effective use of interpersonal skills. Makes accurate judgment by objectively assessing a problem and identifies the appropriate course of action.

Role model. One who exhibits professional behavior, competent performance and advanced interpersonal skills.

Unit resource. May have additional specialty training or responsibility for specific tasks on a unit.

Assessment and Evaluation

The preceptor/mentor should support and encourage the intern/extern to be self-directed in his or her learning rather than the preceptor/mentor directing all learning. Because the intern/extern may have minimal experience in this occupational area, the preceptor/mentor should provide a broad base of experiences. Whenever possible, link theory from the classroom to the skills performed in the clinical area. Make learning problem- rather than subject-oriented. The learning environment should be informal and supportive, allowing students to learn by inquiry. The foundation of the preceptor/mentor-intern/extern relationship should be one of collaboration.

Assessment and Evaluation Tools

Performance in the following items by the intern/extern should help you construct an accurate assessment of the his or her abilities. Evaluate the intern/extern based on the behavior in the following areas:

- projects
- case studies
- performance-based skills
- portfolio
- experiential journals
- regular review sessions with preceptor/mentor (oral and written)
- written worksite examination
- professional development and growth

Sample Assessment Form

MS: Meets Standard
BS: Below Standard

		Meets Standard	Below Standard
A.	**Understanding of Worksite Organization**		
1.	Demonstrates knowledge of hospital mission statement		
2.	Describes functions of the department's work		
3.	Explains how department relates with other departments		
4.	Explains purpose of major departmental procedures		
5.	Follows policies and procedures		
B.	**Universal Precautions**		
1.	Understands and demonstrates universal precautions for self and patients		
	a. Self b. Others		
C.	**Anatomy and Physiology (where applicable)**		
1.	Understands and demonstrates basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology		
	a. Muscular-skeletal system		
	b. Digestive system		
	c. Cardiovascular system		
	d. Nervous system		
	e. Respiratory system		
	f. Reproductive system		
	g. Human body		
D.	**Medical Terminology**		
	1. Understands medical terminology		

Other: _____

_____

		Meets Standard	Below Standard
A.	**Ethics**		
1.	Demonstrates honesty and reliability		
2.	Maintains integrity in reporting time or completing time sheets		
3.	Maintains the rights, dignity, and confidentiality of patient		
B.	**Behaviors**		
1.	Complete tasks in a timely fashion		
2.	Shows a commitment to accuracy in work		
3.	Demonstrates an ability to work independently		
4.	Takes initiative when appropriate		
5.	Responds and follows through on patient requests		
C.	**Professionalism**		
1.	Adheres to schedule and discusses changes with preceptor/mentor		
2.	Arrives on time, takes appropriate time for breaks/lunch		
3.	Informs preceptor/mentor if late or absent		
4.	Adheres to professional dress code		
5.	Wears appropriate attire at all times		
6.	Does not receive personal phone calls except in an emergency		
7.	Maintains patient confidentiality		
8.	Demonstrates respect for authority		
D.	**Teamwork**		
1.	Knows and follows plan of care		
2.	Performs duties as requested/assigned		
3.	Cooperates with team members to achieve team goals		
E.	**Communication**		
1.	Writes clearly, concisely, and accurately		
2.	Listens actively; understands directions		
3.	Asks questions to learn, to solve problems and to clarify		
4.	Communicates effectively with patients and coworkers		
5.	Communicates with patient/family and provides support		

Other: _____

_____

Credentialling

The Skills Standards Certificate is a credential serving as evidence of assessed achievement, quality of performance, or degree of proficiency required to complete a unit or work for a specific occupation or cluster of occupations. The standard signifies a desirable, agreed upon *level* of accomplishment or degree of change.

Certification signifies mastery of knowledge, workplace skills, academic competencies, and occupationally specific skills developed by industry and professional associations, unions, licensing authorities, and skill standard pilot project. In addition to possessing a high school diploma, the levels of certifications are defined as follows:

Level I Certification: Mastery of generic academic, job entry occupational, and work-readiness skills.

Level II Certification: Mastery of a common set of skills to perform in high performance workplaces within broad industrial or occupational clusters.

Level III Certification: Mastery of knowledge, workplace skills, academic competencies, and occupationally specific skills developed by industry and professional associations, unions, licensing authorities, and skill standard pilot projects.

The Skill Standards Certificate would be achieved at Level III.

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Important Phone Numbers

Contact the appropriate person promptly to ask questions or to discuss problems concerning student interns/externs.

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The [name of school district] does not discriminate in any of its educational programs activities, or employment practices on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sex, marital status, age, handicap, or English speaking ability.

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